



UNDP: Supporting Least Developed Countries to Address Climate Change



There is increasing concern that climate change will undermine poverty reduction efforts and the Millennium Development Goals. This is especially true for Least Developed Countries (LDCs). These vulnerable countries face a broad range of climate change impacts – from flooding risks and sea-level rise in island and low-lying coastal countries to increased rainfall variability and hotter and drier climates in land-locked arid countries. Some LDCs could see increasing health threats from diseases like malaria as temperatures rise.

LDC populations are the most likely to bear the brunt of climate change because they are heavily reliant on climate-vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and forestry to drive their economies, putting food security and future development at risk. Yet, they are often the least equipped to adapt.

The ability for all countries to understand and adapt to climate change impacts and chart development paths that are low emission, climate resilient and pro poor is essential. However, institutional capacities within LDCs to address these myriad challenges are lacking. This is particularly problematic as the landscape in which decisions about climate change are made continues to evolve rapidly, as new funding sources are revealed, new technologies emerge, and new policies and approaches developed.

In response, UNDP's Executive Board demonstrated its commitment to supporting LDCs to prepare for climate change by dedicating US\$5.6 million from its core funds to the **Strategic Initiative to Address Climate**

Change in LDCs, also known as 'Boots on the Ground'. This initiative provides technical and policy support to 26 countries globally, including 23 LDCs, across three key areas: 1) assistance to the international climate negotiations; 2) capacity building to access and implement climate finance; and 3) effectively integrating climate change into a country's national plans, policies and strategies to ensure development is both low-emission and climate resilient.

Participating countries

- Bangladesh
- Burkina Faso
- Cambodia
- Djibouti
- Guinea Bissau
- Lao PDR
- Liberia
- Maldives
- Nepal
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Timor Leste
- Yemen
- Benin
- Bhutan
- Democratic Rep. of Congo
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Mozambique
- Mali
- Nicaragua
- Senegal
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Zambia

International Negotiations

UNDP recognizes the importance of LDCs' needs being voiced and being heard at the international climate negotiations, and is working with both LDC governments and civil-society organizations to articulate those needs. The Boots on the Ground initiative is building capacity in the participating countries to understand and meaningfully participate in the

international climate negotiations, including at major events such as those held in Cancun in late 2010 and Durban in late 2011.

For example, through this initiative, a training session was run for decision-makers in **Bhutan** in April 2011 to improve their understanding of the impact that various commitments made under the Kyoto Protocol will have on global emissions; thereby improving their ability to effectively participate in future negotiations. In **Bangladesh**, a similar policy dialogue on “The Road to Durban” was held in May 2011 to share information and progress on climate change negotiations in the lead up to COP 17.

Climate Finance

The ability to efficiently absorb and allocate funding from both new and existing sources is critical for LDCs to effectively address climate change, and this will become increasingly important as the financial architecture associated with climate change becomes bigger and more complex. Despite the many potential sources of funds available, many LDCs struggle to access these funds. The distribution of Clean Development Mechanism projects—with 80% of projects clustered in five large economies—provides an obvious example.

UNDP has produced many tools and resources on how to access climate finance, and is providing support to build the capacity of countries across the globe to improve their ability to access and absorb existing and emerging climate finance opportunities. These will now be tailored to LDC audiences.

For example, in **Burkina Faso, Lao PDR, and Mozambique**, UNDP is working alongside other development partners to improve capacities to directly access climate finance available under the Adaptation Fund.

Likewise, in **Ethiopia, Togo and Yemen**, UNDP is improving understanding of national stakeholders on the potential structures, key requirements, and ideal conditions for the creation of National Climate Funds, as a tool for national direction of climate finance.

Integrating Climate into Development

UNDP is also assisting governments to ensure their national development plans and policies adequately integrate climate change to ensure development in LDCs is both low emission and climate resilient.

Through this initiative, UNDP is working to assist the governments of **Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Liberia, Samoa and Tanzania** to mainstream climate change into their national poverty reduction and development strategies.

Not only is ‘Boots on the Ground’ intended to ensure climate policy coherence from the global to the national level, it also aims to make a change from the aid industry’s business-as-usual, project-oriented approach to climate change. Instead, a coordinated and coherent approach to activities to address climate change is used, promoting perspectives and frameworks that encourage better integration of development and climate change agendas; empowering governments to better articulate their needs within the UNFCCC negotiations; and advising on the steps to transform economies towards low emission, climate resilient development.

For further information contact:

United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017 USA
Telephone: (212) 906-5073
www.undp.org/climatechange

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